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~~SECRET~~

O SPECIAL INTERROGATION REPORT

ON

Ostubaf Dr Rudolf ÖRSGER-RÜDER

3 Richard ROPP

(Ref Brief IB/B3/PF 9445 dated 2 Jul 46.
See also CSDIC(WEA) SIR 29 dated 2 May 46, and
CSDIC(WEA) SR 0040 dated 31 May 46)

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I. PREAMBLE

Prisoner worked in "Unternehmen Zeppelin" from summer 42 to end autumn 43. In addition he occasionally attended conferences of the specialists of the "Unternehmen" right up to the end of the war, when the basic problems of the GIS in Russian territory were discussed. Since at that time he no longer actually belonged to the organisation, he has no very detailed knowledge of the matter. The info which he can give is therefore limited.

All detailed reports and collated info on the CAUCASUS came under the following reference numbers in Amt VI RSHA: VI C, VI CZ, VI C(1 - 3), and to a small extent VI C 4. Prisoner suggests that corresponding investigations should be made among the documents captured from the Germans by the British and American IS (the documents of Amt VI which were not destroyed before evacuation were sent in a closed transport to the emergency quarters in the SOUTH, a place on the Thuringian-Bavarian border served by a rly stn on the BERLIN-MUNICH line). Very few documents were taken to FRANCOBURG.

3. In this connection Prisoner makes special mention of a comprehensive printed or photographed work, "KLUKASUS Denkschrift", in book form, which contained an excellent survey of all historical, economic, cultural and other info on the CAUCASUS, and several very good maps. It is the work of Prof. ACHNETELI (Georgian Emigré of the 1914-18 War); it never appeared on the market and was not given public circulation.

II. GIS OPERATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THE CAUCASUS

4. General

Until the fusion of the German political and military foreign int services in 1944, Amt VI of the RSHA worked on its own as a political foreign int service, quite independent of Amt Ausl u Abw of the OKW, which was a military foreign int service. "Unternehmen Zeppelin" in Amt VI had its equivalent as a political foreign int undertaking in the "Unternehmen Wally" of Amt Ausl u Abw. Both of these operations were directed against the whole of the unoccupied zone of the USSR, and also against the CAUCASUS. "Unternehmen Wally" functioned on a much wider basis than "Unternehmen Zeppelin", and had more means at its disposal. "Unternehmen Wally" was directed by Obstlt BAUN, who in 1942 had his HQ nr RASTENBURG/EAST RUSSIA.

Obstlt SCHIRNIG and Obstlt LINNHARDT worked against the CAUCASUS in military matters for the German Heeresgruppe SÜD. Sdr SCHÖN worked on LINNHARDT's (or BAUN's) staff, in a castle nr VIENNITA/UKRAINE.

There were the following divisions within "Unternehmen Zeppelin", according to the distribution of the population in the CAUCASUS:

- North Caucasian operations;
- Georgian operations;
- Azerbaijan operations;
- Armenian operations.

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(In this connection the word "operation" implies a single individual act of espionage.)

The leaders of "Unternehmen Zeppelin" were convinced that of all the regions of the Soviet Union, the CAUCASUS in particular offered especially favourable opportunities for int operations, for the following reasons:-

a) Terrain

Hills, woods, lonely country - but also populous towns (mountains always offer great difficulties from a flying point of view as regards the landing of agents by parachute).

b) Political Tendencies

It is a fact that the Caucasian people were only incorporated into RUSSIA in the 19th century, and then in some regions only after a bitter struggle. Opposition (of a National Separatist nature) against the Tsarist and Bolshevik regimes has always been very much in evidence in the CAUCASUS, and has manifested itself in a practical way. The CAUCASUS has a real tradition not only of anti-Bolshevism, but also of anti-Russian resistance.

c) Religion

The North Caucasian hill people and the people of AZERBAIJAN are followers of ISLAM (Shiites, like the Persians). While the Bolshevik ideal has replaced the old Orthodox Christian belief to a large extent in RUSSIA, this has happened to a far less degree in the case of the Islamites. The former Islamites are bound for the most part by a comparatively stronger religious tie and are therefore less open to Bolshevik influence. For this reason they are more susceptible to anti-Bolshevik propaganda.

d) Other Favourable Circumstances

Armenians, and more particularly Georgians (Grusinians), are scattered throughout the whole of the Russian territory. Moreover Georgians are playing an increasingly important part in the Bolshevik hierarchy (STALIN-JUGASHVILI and BERIJA are of Georgian origin; they have placed fellow-countrymen in important positions). Thus the CAUCASUS had to be regarded not only as a Russian buffer-state, but as a base from which the whole of RUSSIA could be attacked.

5. Summary of actual GIS Operations carried out in the CAUCASUS

In 1942-43 the operations carried out by "Unternehmen Zeppelin" against the CAUCASUS were directed mainly against the North Caucasian and Georgian regions. The chief reason for this was that there were larger numbers of agents available who were suitable for this area. As long as the Front remained in or near the CAUCASUS (1942), the majority of the agents destined for work in the North Caucasian region could be sent through the lines (the nature of the Eastern Front was such that, given a knowledge of the country, one could always find gaps through which agents could be passed). The North Caucasian operations were begun without the help of WT sets and operators, but the Georgian groups which were established at the same time had WT eqpt. The Georgian agents were taken by air to the zone of operations and dropped by parachute. The aircraft employed were based on EUPATORIA/CRIMEA.

Even after the CAUCASUS and the territory adjoining it had been evacuated by the Germans (end 42/beg 43), agents were still passed through the lines towards the CAUCASUS. These so-called "close-range" operations were carried out in summer 43 by the Aussenkdos KERCH and TIGANROG working for the Hptkdo SOUTH RUSSIA of "Unternehmen Zeppelin". The execution of these operations (also called "ground operations") was the sole responsibility of the Aussenkdos. The Hptkdo and the BERLIN Staff only laid down the rough outlines. Likewise in summer 43 specialised groups of agents equipped with WT left SAROBZ/CRIMEA and MARIUPOL airfields, with a view to landing by parachute in NORTH CAUCASUS, GEORGIA, NORTH AZERBAIJAN and TURKESTAN.

6. Methods

a) Types of Agents Used

Agents were selected from all the Caucasian races, as long as they appeared reliable and suitable for the work. The North Caucasian hill people and the people of AZERBAIJAN were regarded as particularly reliable. On the other hand, no good results were obtained from Armenians, who lacked hardness and reliability. The Georgian agents were thought at first to be exceptionally reliable and mentally suited for the work, but as time went on they turned out to be less so (Prisoner thinks that this was a result of the unkind and stupid German policy towards RUSSIA and the CAUCASUS). In addition to Caucasian deserters from the Red Army and F.W., Caucasian civilians were also employed (especially refugees from the NORTH CAUCASUS, who had left their homes when the German Army withdrew in Winter 1942/43).

Unternehmen Zeppelin never made use of Caucasian migrants of the 1914-18 War and afterwards, or of Germans. In 1943, however, to Prisoner's own knowledge, a German-Persian mission was sent by aircraft to SOUTH PERSIA by Air VI. The German leader of this operation, SS Hauptsturmführer KURMIS, was reported to have been captured by the British CI, and to have shot himself. Prisoner recalls that on several occasions in 1942/43 the German MI Abw sent German parachutists of the BRANDENBURG Div. on a kind of agent-mission behind the Russian lines in the CAUCASUS.

b) Training of Agents

The type of "Zeppelin" agents always remained basically the same. Some experiments were made, however, in the tech methods of type employed, especially as the German IS could not draw on any previous experience or parallels.

Representatives of Unternehmen Zeppelin selected the candidates for the type mostly from PW Camps, Deserter Camps, and to some extent from camps of foreign workers. Those who were chosen in this way were then taken to so-called Preliminary Training Camps organised by Unternehmen Zeppelin. The programme in these camps was as follows:

- (i) The candidates were divided into groups (10-15 men) and platoons (about 30-40 men), and if necessary, into companies (about 100 men), for purposes of discipline. Leaders were chosen from each group, ie specially tested and trained Caucasian "instructors". The camp was run by a German SS-Führer who had an assistant and a small staff of Unterführers.
- (ii) The candidates were given German uniform, a medical inspection, etc, and were treated as regards rations etc on the same scale as the German Army.
- (iii) They were tested for reliability and aptitude for ultimate employment.
- (iv) The candidates were asked whether they were prepared to fight against Bolshevism as volunteers in the German Army or the SS (as "Auxiliaries", and later as "VLASOV-soldiers").
- (v) Those candidates who did not appear to be reliable enough, who had no aptitude for the work, or who refused to fight voluntarily against Bolshevism, were removed from the Training Camp and returned to their places of recruitment (PW Camp or Deserters' Camp).
- (vi) The remaining candidates were given ideological indoctrination on the following lines: GERMANY was liberating the Caucasian people from the Russian and Bolshevik yoke. Caucasian nationalistic feeling was fostered; candidates were urged to prepare themselves to play an active part in "the fight for freedom". This teaching was done mostly by Caucasian "instructors" specially trained for the work. The necessary literature and outfit for this instruction were supplied by the "Winsta" Dienststelle of the Ministry of Volksaufklärung and Propaganda, the "Wahrheit Propaganda" Dept of the OR, the HQ of the

GOC Eastern Forces, and the Ministry for the Eastern Occupied Countries. Never in the course of this instruction - in fact, at no point during the preliminary trg course - were the candidates told that it was planned to use them as agents. They were given the impression that they were being prepared for armed fighting at the front at a later date, as members of a volunteer unit.

(vii) Parallel with those efforts to encourage a Caucasian nationalistic ideology, steps were taken to give the candidates the best possible impression of the German war potential (lectures on German fronts on all fronts; social and economic achievements; a survey of factory installations and settlements; "control of culture", etc.). In this connection anti-Bolshevik ideas were to be strengthened.

(viii) WT basic trg was started for a section of the candidates at the Preliminary Trg Camp.

After a minimum of eight weeks' trg at the Preliminary Trg Camp (Vor-lager), candidates considered suitable were transferred to a so-called Main Camp (Hauptlager). The chief aim of the Preliminary Camp was to test the reliability and aptitude of the candidates for the work for which they were destined, and to carry out indoctrination on general lines. The Main Camp, however, gave individual and specialised trg for agent-operations. The programme was as follows:

- (i) The trainees were given basic instruction for the tasks they were to carry out;
- (ii) Operational groups were built up (maximum of 4 - 6 people);
- (iii) Operations were planned and tasks allotted, the utmost attention being paid to trainees' own suggestions;
- (iv) Materials for the operations were assembled (clothing, eqpt, identity documents etc.);
- (v) WT trg was intensified (the aim was to provide each group with two operators);
- (vi) Further anti-Bolshevist propaganda was carried out, and the ideology of a "Free CAUCASUS" was continued, as well as general propaganda, as in the Preliminary Camp.

The course at the Main Camp was calculated to last three months. When the trg was finished and aircraft were available, the agents were taken in groups to the advanced landing ground, which was located in Russian territory.

In both the Preliminary and Main Camps, as indeed in the whole of the "Zeppelin" organisation, the term "agent" was carefully avoided. It was preferred to use the word "activist" exclusively, in order not to create a feeling of mercenary and disreputable "spying" among the Caucasians. The Aktivisten were to be firmly convinced that they were not going into the front line in the German interest, but rather to fight of their own free will for the freedom of their country (though admittedly with considerable German support).

c) Transport of Agents to the Front

The agents were taken to the CAUCASUS either through the Russian lines or by aircraft (in the latter case they landed by parachute). There was also a scheme in hand for transporting them by ship, but tech difficulties arose which prevented it from being carried out.

The aircraft used by Unternehmen Zeppelin for operations in the CAUCASUS also did service for the Wehrmacht/Abw. They belonged to Maj GERTHELD's squadron.

At first (1942) DUBATORA and SAKI/CRIMEA were used as airfields against the CAUCASUS; later (1943) T.GAVROG and SIROBUD were used. Prisoner believes that air-transport to the CAUCASUS was suspended in 1944 because the German withdrawals had rendered the distances too

The agents who were sent through the lines were almost always those who had few qualifications and had received little trg. They had only a short preparation at the Ausseinkdo of Unternehmen Zeppelin and were not equipped with WT apparatus.

Owing to difficult flying conditions, it was not possible to send aircraft to the C.AUC.SUS during the winter. In summer 43 an aircraft of Grawe's squadron which was to plant agents in the C.AUC.SUS was lost, and it was thought that it must have struck a cliff.

7. Aims of OTS operations directed against the C.AUC.SUS

The main objective of all operations carried out by Unternehmen Zeppelin was to obtain political intelligence from the far-distant Russian hinterland (if intelligence was also obtained, it was passed on to Volkmarck/Abw). Political intelligence was obtained not only by means of agents, but also by comprehensive interrogation of P. and Red ARMY deserters by the Aussendienst of Unternehmen Zeppelin in the territory near the front.

Attempts were also made, by the despatch of specially trained and qualified agents, to develop political resistance movements in the C.AUC.SUS, which were intended to weaken the Russian war-making by exploiting critical situations in the Russian army and in the general political field.

8. Outside Collaboration

a) Attitude of the Local Population

According to all available reports, the German Army was received with the utmost friendliness by the local population in the C.AUC.SUS in 1942. It is also significant that several thousands of North Caucasians left their homes in horses and carts when the German Army evacuated the Northern C.AUC.SUS in 1942/43 (this is claimed as "an established fact"). Prisoner witnessed it himself. Prisoner learned from unbiased reports that when the Red ARMY (especially NKVD units) occupied the C.AUC.SUS, it took severe measures against any members of the local population who were suspected in any way of having collaborated with the Germans.

Operations carried out by Unternehmen Zeppelin never received any actual support worth mentioning from the Caucasian population. In 1942/43 reliable Zeppelin agents brought back authentic reports that considerable sections of the Caucasian population were quite prepared to give their entire support, especially if Caucasian nationalists came back to the country. This willingness still existed to a large extent in 1943. Prisoner is of the opinion, in view of reports he received, that this readiness to co-operate on the part of the Caucasians is still alive, as the Caucasian mentality is such that it would never completely die out.

According to messages received from one of the Georgian "Vera" groups, agents dropped in GEORGIA found willing support immediately among the native Georgian population if their plans went wrong and they had to ask for civilian help after landing by parachute.

b) Collaboration with the Turkish IS

Prisoner himself never worked with the Turkish IS. The following plan, however, was explained to him by SS Stubaf Dr HENGELHAUPT, towards the end of his period of service with Unternehmen Zeppelin:

Ced) HENGELHAUPT intended to collaborate with SS Stubaf Kurt SCHUEACK (Referent for TURKEY in Amt VI RSHA), operating from TURKEY and sending Georgian agents to GEORGIA. Prisoner believes that the driving force behind this plan was the Georgian KEDLA (see para 14). He believes, too, that a Georgian organisation existed in TURKEY, legally or illegally, which was linked with GEORGIA by means of agents. HENGELHAUPT once showed Prisoner (beg 1942/?) a report, which had probably reached him from GEORGIA via TURKEY. HENGELHAUPT mentioned on this occasion the mutual interest of GERMANY and TURKEY (or rather of the German and Turkish IS) in such documents. Prisoner thinks that there must have been some collaboration between the German and Turkish IS, and suggests that SCHUEACK could give details of this.

9. Problems affecting the Operations

a) Equipment

i) WT Apparatus

WT sets for Zorulin agents were designed by the Tech Group of 4th VT RSHA (VI F) and were then produced in the workshops of the same dept. Workmen of the dept stated that they were sets capable of "precision work", but Prisoner's experience as a layman led him to take a very sceptical view of this. It was his opinion that the sets were too sensitive and too complicated for ordinary use. Moreover, they had insufficient range (this became evident particularly after the German withdrawal in autumn 43). Finally, WT sets were never available in sufficient quantities at the right time.

ii) Aircraft

While Prisoner was working in Unternehmen Zorulin, there was a continual shortage of aircraft for transporting agents to the CAUCASUS. He considers that G-1 GRFLD's squadron was not adequately equipped with aircraft. In addition, Wehrmacht/Abw (probably out of rivalry) "froze" first claim.

b) Reliability of Agents

In the Preliminary and Main Camps the agents were thoroughly "vetted" for reliability. The vetting was done not so much by the Germans who ran the camps as by the Caucasian instructors and by the agents themselves, as it was in their own interests to discover all unsuitable and unreliable elements. The Caucasian agents were often sent into action at the front missions; the idea was that prospective agents should give proof of their dependability in action and should thus "establish" themselves. If, for example, a man who had formerly been in the Red Army fought against the Red Army under the Germans, it was considered an unpardonable offence under Russian law. In such cases there was no question of returning to Russian territory.

Sometimes operations were considerably delayed owing to the lack of transport facilities (aircraft), WT apparatus or other equipment. In this way there was sometimes a period of waiting after the end of the actual agent-training during which the agents could be given only partial employment, with no fixed programme. The agents were anxious to go into action as soon as possible and during this waiting period often lost their enthusiasm and turned "sour".

c) The "Free CAUCASUS" Ideology

Unternehmen Zorulin attempted not only to obtain political int., but also to encourage political resistance movements in the CAUCASUS. A mere agent-training course was insufficient for such a plan, as it was much more important to rouse the spirit of the agents and instil them with enthusiasm for their allotted tasks. For this purpose it was necessary to have a political programme and a political ideology ("Free CAUCASUS"). When the more intelligent of the agents saw what a completely irresponsible and senseless policy the Germans were pursuing with regard to the EAST and the CAUCASUS, they became suspicious. They were aware of discrepancies between what their Zorulin tutors had told them about a "Free CAUCASUS" and the attitude of the official German orgs controlling Eastern policy.

d) Russian Security Measures

Apart from the usual NKVD machinery, Prisoner is not aware of any special Russian security measures against German operations in the CAUCASUS.

10. Results Obtained

a) Contacts Established within the Area

Contracts were established in K. RICHAEVSK, D. LIMESK and GEORGIA. Those in GEORGIA seemed most promising and consisted of two or three groups known under the cover-name of "Vera". They succeeded in setting up liaison with the head doctor of a hospital in TIFLIS or MULISI (?), who probably had connections with an Independence Movement which was being built up in GEORGIA. As far as Prisoner knows, these links with the CAUCASUS (like the links with TURKESTAN) were broken in 1944 (agent VT acts were adapted only for short-distance sounding; the continued German withdrawals in RUSSIA eventually cut-shortened their maximum range).

b) Prisoner's Assessment of Success of Operations

As far as Prisoner knows, the efforts of Unternehmen Zeppelin to obtain political int yielded good results. On the other hand the attempts to launch political Resistance Movements in the CAUCASUS were on much too small a scale. In any case, very little actual proof was available of success in this field. Prisoner attributes this to faults both on the technical and on the material side, and, more especially, to the basic principles of official German policy.

11. German Stay-behind Organisations in the CAUCASUS

Prisoner has no knowledge of any agents (German, Caucasian or Turcoman members of the Wehrmacht) being left behind in the CAUCASUS or in TURKESTAN to set up an int org there.

12. Later German Attempts to renew activities against the CAUCASUS

Prisoner himself left Unternehmen Zeppelin in autumn 1943 and can give no definite info on this point. He knows, however, that the former SS Stubaf Erhard HEINZ attempted in 1944, in a so-called "Unternehmen VOLF", to leave agents behind when the CRIMEA was evacuated. He also tried at a later date to send new agents there by aircraft (mainly Tartars). HEINZ belonged to the Staff of SS PF MAURER at SHERBOPOL/CRIMEA, and later to that of the SS PF BLACK SEA at CONSTANTA and JASSY. When the German front in ROUMANIA collapsed, the completion of these operations was rendered impossible. HEINZ was killed in POLAND in 1945.

13. Miscellaneous

Prisoner has no knowledge of any German int operations against the CAUCASUS based elsewhere than in SOUTH RUSSIA. He is of the opinion that it would be quite possible to build up connections again in the CAUCASUS and TURKESTAN similar to those which existed during his period of service with Unternehmen Zeppelin (via TURKESTAN to the CAUCASUS and via AFGHANISTAN to TURKESTAN). He suggests that conditions on the AFGHANISTAN-TURKESTAN frontier are highly favourable for the setting-up of such a network, owing to the continuous flux of the native population (Kazaks and Tadzhiks). "Everyone who has been criminally or politically involved with the Russian authorities is trying to cross the border into AFGHANISTAN". There are said to be tens of such people in the TURKESTAN-AFGHANISTAN frontier zone.

14. Other Sources

Prisoner suggests that the following men, who may now or at some future date be in Allied hands, could give further info on all points in the questionnaire on which his own knowledge is limited:

SS Stubaf Dr Erich HETGELMUTH

(Referent VI C 1-?, RUSSIA, of Int VI; Prisoner's successor as "Zeppelin" specialist.)

SS Stubaf Walter KUPFER
SS Hauptsf HUHN

Prisoner's predecessor in "Zeppelin". Had detailed knowledge of "Zeppelin" operations in CAUCASUS; worked for several years on the material side. All operations in the CAUCASUS were dealt with by him.

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~~SECRET~~ Cossack, aged about 30, 14-18 yrs, working member of the "Cooperation Committee" in Georgia. Very intelligent, enthusiastic, inclined to have biased opinions, but has much specialised knowledge of Obstruction, particularly Georgia. Has wide knowledge of all Caucasian problems and is particularly well versed in Georgian affairs.

CSDIC (W.E.)
19 JUN 1945

[Signature]
for Colonel GS
Commandant CSDIC (W.E.)

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